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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001432

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/11/2012
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: AL-SAMANI: SUDAN READY FOR THE HYBRID

Classified By: CDA ALBERTO M. FERNANDEZ, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Reiterating Sudan's commitment to the hybrid force in a September 11 meeting with CDA Fernandez, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Wasila al-Samani said the ball was now squarely in the UN's court. Appealing to the perceived close relationship between the US and the south, al-Samani asked CDA to press the SPLM for more flexible negotiations and greater patience on key CPA sticking points. Al-Samani also spoke highly of his recent visit to Washington and advocated for establishing a joint committee to encourage further dialogue, suggesting that President al-Bashir was in favor of such a mechanism as well. He had spent 90 minutes the previous night briefing al-Bashir on the Washington meetings. End summary.

SUDAN READY FOR THE HYBRID

¶2. (C) In the first meeting with CDA since returning from his recent visit to Washington, al-Samani expressed thanks for what he termed a good step forward in the bilateral relationship. The meetings were excellent, he said, and there had been "lots of agreement" on the hybrid force. Al-Samani said that the hybrid force had been endorsed at all levels of the Sudanese government (though it wouldn't permit the addition of "a single dot" to the agreement), and what remained was for the international community to tell Sudan exactly what is needed. "The ball is in the UN's court," he said. Al-Samani said that last night President Bashir had personally called Ambassador Abdelhalim and instructed him to cooperate with his US counterparts on all details of implementation. Al-Samani also asserted that the land and water issues had been sorted out -- "I got a report on it today" from UN spokeswoman Radhia Achouri.

CPA: HELP US WITH THE SPLM

¶3. (C) Turning to the CPA, al-Samani called for greater consultations to push negotiations forward and specifically asked CDA to intervene with the SPLM because "you can talk to the south." The SPLM was wrongly accusing the NCP of trying to push the borders south, he said. CDA warned him that things were likely to explode in situations where there was a lack of trust, citing last week's standoff in Muglad. Al-Samani insisted that negative rhetoric around the CPA was damaging, and public commentary on issues like the redeployment of forces (on both sides) was not helpful. "We want a lasting solution for the borders, but we need time. In

March next year -- we want to wait for the rains to stop and the roads to open." Al-Samani said that the NCP was committed to the CPA, noting that the Joint Commission gave it an 86 percent compliance rate to the SPLM's 6.9 percent on troop withdrawal levels.

¶4. (C) CDA acknowledged that international pressure to implement the CPA was tough, "but it helps to increase trust," he told al-Samani. It was also true that the US had a better relationship with the south than the north, but that was because "we hear from the south." The SPLM was distrustful of the NCP and saw itself as the weak partner, CDA added, and felt that key issues like Abyei and final borders were sacrificed to more peripheral concerns. (Note: CDA also reiterated his desire to meet with NCP senior officials like Nafie Ali Nafie and Salah Ghosh, and to discuss concerns about USG support for the SPLA in particular. End note.)

GOOD WILL, GOOD DISCUSSIONS

¶5. (C) Al-Samani said that discussions in Washington on forming a US-Sudan joint committee to discuss bilateral issues had been fruitful; CDA told him while there had been no decision yet on such a committee ("though it would be good for tension management"), D/S Negroponte would discuss it with FM Lam Akol when they met during UNGA. (Note: Al-Samani also proposed a return visit to Washington the third week of October if conditions were right. End note.) Al-Samani also positively characterized discussions on the issues of removing Sudan from the state sponsors of terrorism list and lifting sanctions once the hybrid force had been fully deployed.

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¶6. (C) Another "nice gesture" that would serve both sides would be to release all nine of the Sudanese detainees at Guantanamo, al-Samani said. The Sudanese would be happy, and the US and Sudan would be relieved of the pressure of Al-Jazeera's constant coverage of journalist Sami al-Haj. Al-Samani also suggested that resolving operational difficulties for the Sudanese embassy in Washington would "give us confidence to speak on behalf of the US" on issues such as NEC containers. He also thanked CDA for the Embassy statement condemning the recent attacks in Wad Banda, which had been well received. CDA said that the Embassy would be prepared to issue a similar statement once Suleiman Jamous was permitted to leave Sudan.

¶7. (C) Saying that he had briefed President Bashir the previous evening on his Washington visit, al-Samani quoted him as saying: "We have nothing against the Americans. If they really want to be partners, no problem." The president was also in favor of establishing a joint committee, he said, and asked the MFA to proceed if this was something the Americans were willing to do.

SENSITIVE TIMES AHEAD

¶8. (C) CDA cautioned al-Samani that the weeks leading up to the October 27 peace talks would be very sensitive; the movements were still very fragmented despite UN/AU efforts, and it would be difficult to ensure the participation of the Fur community and IDPs without Abdul Wahid. "There will be people who will want to blame the failure on you -- or on (chief negotiator and NCP hardliner) Nafie," he noted. While there was room over the next few months for positive movement on several fronts and the international community had a significant role to play in this, CDA added, the Sudanese government would need to carefully manage the impressions it sent out. Al-Samani said that the government of Sudan intends

to be low-key about the tentative steps towards rapprochement between Sudan and the US.

19. (C) Comment: It is important that two weeks after his visit to Washington, al-Samani finally briefed President al-Bashir about it on September 10. Sudan has made progress on UNSCR 1769 implementation, humanitarian access and (maybe soon) on the release of Suleiman Jamous. They are also sending the right noises about an improved bilateral relationship and process to address outstanding issues. The key step on our part will be, as a famous statesman noted once, "trust but verify," and in the case of Sudan, double-check the verification. End comment.

FERNANDEZ